

## **Programme for Special Exchange Students**

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This program has given me better understanding of not only economics but also sustainability, especially in terms of environmental sustainability. It has also allowed me to look at Japan from a different point of view. As I have been doing my research related to tourism, this opportunity has helped me to understand the actual situation of one of the most famous and popular tourist sites in Japan. This experience would not only contribute to the development of my current research but also encourage my future research as well. Before being sent to Kyoto University, I was in the presumption that the study would focus mainly on economics. However it turned out that it involved many kinds of fields of study such as politics, history, environment, development, and so forth as well as economics. Everything that was discussed in class was new for me, and all the discussions conducted were very profitable and profound.

During my stay at Kyoto University, I was able to take five courses. All of them were very interesting, and one of the most inspiring topics was one related to environmental sustainability and development. It showed that environmental conservation has become more and more important, while developments in terms of economics and infrastructure and so forth, are urgently required in these countries in order to contribute towards a more sustainable development. In order for these countries to develop, they are required to use their resources. By using resources, however, the environment of local communities as well as that of countries' would be at risk of environmental disturbance. Southeast Asian countries, on which my research mainly focuses, are in this dilemma. These countries have been encouraging economical development at expense of their environment, resulting in increasing numbers of natural disasters and transboundary environmental issues that involve neighboring countries. Therefore, discussions involving environmental sustainability and development were very helpful in thinking about possible research topics in the future.

In order to have some discussions in class, the program contained an excursion which took the students to the nuclear power center in Fukushima Prefecture. Nuclear energy is considered as environmentally friendly energy. However, after the tremendous earthquake and devastating tsunami, it has reminded people that nuclear energy is not necessarily safe. This field research enabled us to reconsider environmental protection as well as sustainable ways of using resources. This field trip gave an opportunity to think of a sustainable way of living by visiting a district called Harie. In this place, people are well aware of the importance of their environment and the community-based effort to protect it. This gave better understanding of environmental conservation and sustainable ways of living.

This program as a whole was very profitable and helpful thanks to the professors, students, and staff at the university. All of them are very friendly and willing to discuss anything. Whether during the class or outside the class, the professors and the staff were eager to support and took very good care of the students. Even though this opportunity was only two months long, so many things were taught. If there is another opportunity to study at Kyoto University, I would like to participate again.